

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-13 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00
OMB-01 COME-00 HA-05 DOE-15 SOE-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /125 W
-----011271 040119Z /70

R 031450Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9264
INFO: RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 1181
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8172

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MPOL, GW, NI
SUBJECT: SCHMIDT RETURNS TO LAGOS

REF: LAGOS 8101

1. MUCH TO THE SURPRISE OF THE GERMANS, FMG
HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO AND MOST OF THE SUPREME
MILITARY COUNCIL SHOWED UP AT MURTALA MUHAMMED
AIRPORT ON FRIDAY WHEN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S
AIRCRAFT WAS SCHEDULED TO MAKE A TECHNICAL
STOP ON THE WAY FROM LUSAKA TO HAMBURG.
ACCORDING TO FRG EMBASSY COUNSELOR KUHNA, THE
NIGERIANS ARRIVED UNEXPECTEDLY ABOARD TWO
HELICOPTERS A FEW MINUTES BEFORE 2:00 P.M.
WHEN SCHMIDT'S AIRCRAFT WAS SUPPOSED TO ARRIVE
FOR REFUELING. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO KUHNA,
THE CHANCELLOR WAS TWO HOURS LATE BECAUSE
PRESIDENT KAUNDA DECIDED ON THE WAY TO THE
AIRPORT TO GIVE SCHMIDT AN IMPROMPTU TOUR OF
LUSAKA. NEVERTHELESS, OBASANJO AND MOST OF HIS
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PARTY REMAINED AT THE AIRPORT AND THE HEAD OF
STATE HAD AN HOUR LONG MEETING WITH SCHMIDT
BEFORE THE FINAL DEPARTURE AT 5:00 P.M. KUHNA
SAID THAT THE GERMANS WERE VERY IMPRESSED BY
OBASANJO'S SURPRISE VISIT WHICH THEY INTERPRETED
AS A GESTURE FROM THE NIGERIANS TO SHOW THAT
THE VISIT WAS A SUCCESS.

2. ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHMIDT VISIT, KUHNA SAID THAT THE GERMANS HAD PREEMPTIVELY RAISED THE OTRAG PROBLEM IN ANTICIPATION THAT THE NIGERIANS MIGHT DO SO. HOWEVER, IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE NIGERIANS HAD NOT DONE ANY HOMEWORK ON THE SUBJECT AND DID NOT ASK ANY FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS. ON SCHEDULING, KUHNA TOLD US THAT AT THE SUGGESTION OF THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN BONN, THE GERMANS HAD RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A STOP IN THE NORTH AT KANO. HOWEVER, NEGOTIATIONS ON A NORTHERN STOP BROKE DOWN IN A TANGLE OF LOGISTICAL AND PROTOCOL PROBLEMS WHICH SOUNDED QUITE SIMILAR TO THE QUESTIONS WHICH PREVENTED A STOP BY PRESIDENT CARTER IN THE NORTH. IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, KUHNA SAID THAT, IN CONTRAST TO OUR EXPERIENCE, THE NIGERIANS WERE DISTINCTLY UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT A NORTHERN STOP PRIMARILY ON SECURITY GROUNDS.

3. SUMMING UP, KUHNA FELT THAT OBASANJO'S SURPRISE TRIP TO THE AIRPORT PROVIDED CONFIRMATION THAT THE TRIP WAS A SUCCESS IN SPITE OF, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF, STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE GERMANS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA. KUHNA FELT THAT ON THE GERMAN SIDE THE TRIP MAY HAVE BENEFITED FRG OFFICIALS

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SUCH AS FOREIGN OFFICE STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL AND CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR RUHFUS WHOSE EXPERIENCE AND OUTLOOK HAVE MAINLY BEEN IN EUROPEAN AND NATO AFFAIRS. KUHNA SAID HE SPOKE AT THE AIPIRT WITH RUHFUS WHO SAID THE TRIP HAD BROUGHT HOME THE FACT PERSONALLY TO THE GERMANS THAT THEY HAD TO PAY MUCH MORE ATTENTION TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS.

4. COMMENT: THE NIGERIANS ARE ALWAYS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE ABOUT SECURITY CONCERNING STATE VISITS WHICH INVOLVE THE NORTH. HOWEVER, IT IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT IN THIS CASE, ACCORDING TO KUHNA, IT APPEARS THAT THEY ALSO HAD IN MIND THE UNREST AND COMMUNAL TENSIONS IN THE NORTH WHICH HAVE RESULTED FROM THE DECISION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN APRIL TO DELETE THE PROVISION IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION WHICH CALLED FOR A FEDERAL SHARIA COURT OF APPEAL.

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